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What's new at 'myPay'

The Web site "myPay," formerly called E/MSS, gives soldiers an inside view to their pay status that soldiers serving 20 years ago may envy. Now, even more enhancements are available at the site, according to Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse T. Sablan, U.S. Army Finance Command.

Key enhancements at the site include:

- a redesigned home page
- new trifold
- Thrift Savings Plan control
- capability for soldiers to print their own

W- Form beginning this month

- a new web address coming soon (myPay.dfas.mil) to replace the current one at <https://emss.dfas.mil/mypay.asp> (the old address will continue to work after the change)
- less clicks to navigate the site

Sablan highlighted the fact that the ability to manage allotments through the site is only available to members of the Marine Corps, but that the option is one that Sablan's team at Finance Command are working to make available to the Army, as well.

He also cautioned that not every myPay option will be available at all times to everyone in the world. Sablan said that local installations have similar abilities available to fulfill customer needs and Finance Command continues to improve the site, making most features more accessible to all.

Sablan said he hoped users would agree that myPay not only serves the Army's soldiers and civilians well, but it does so in ways unavailable in the past. He stressed that using the Web site makes handling pay issues faster and easier than ever before.

Sablan asks users to remember to provide comments and suggestions via the "Contact Us" button on the home page.

PERSCOM switches to AKO e-mail

Capt. John L. Barrett

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (Army News Service) — In terms of personnel business, Army Knowledge Online recently became the official e-mail for all soldiers.

U. S. Army Personnel Command replaced all soldier e-mail addresses currently in its database with AKO addresses. Enlisted soldiers' AKO addresses are required on NCO Evaluation Reports to shorten contact time when an NCOER requires a correction.

Previously, various unit and personal e-mail addresses were saved in the Army's personnel database. Some remained current while others were not updated after soldiers moved away from an installation.

"We want every soldier to be accessible," said Lt. Col. Georgia Bouie, whose office headed the e-mail transfer. The only way to ensure that is to use a common e-mail address that the soldier will have for his entire life."

AKO e-mail is currently used for a variety of official purposes, such as correspondence from career managers and the electronic mailing of travel voucher settlements from the Defense Finance and Accounting System.

The change was implemented at PERSCOM, with no action required on the part of soldiers. Soldiers without AKO addresses will not have a contact e-mail in their database. Soldiers who do not currently have an AKO address should sign up for an account from the AKO Web site at www.us.army.mil, officials said.

AKO e-mail is just one of the various features of the larger AKO initiative. It includes functions such as AKO Chat — which allows soldiers to communicate electronically in real time — and the AKO White Pages, where soldiers can search for other soldiers. AKO provides troops access to functions normally included in the electronic communities of the private sector, officials said.

Private firm offers software to improve board performance

A commercial line of software products recently released may interest soldiers preparing for board appearances.

In a news release from Transcender LLC, the company announced it has released a software program featuring flash cards that sells for around \$15. The company claims its product can be used as a "training tool for soldiers who want to improve their careers and chances of promotion."

Called "NextRank NCO Board," the program provides access to more than 50 reference publications. The company offers licenses for the

software through its Web site at www.nextrank.com.

"Our NCO Board product spans the gamut of knowledge needed to excel before the NCO board," said Scott Baldridge, NextRank content developer. "We have provided a thorough amount of material, with questions that cover 35 subject areas."

The company also touts the program as being user friendly. The flash cards can be used to study at any time and hyper links take the user directly to the relevant portions of the official references.

For more information, visit the company's Web site.

DoD Web site offers single source for deployment info

By Sgt. 1st Class (Ret.) Phil Tegmeier

Department of Defense health officials are offering Army NCOs access to a Web site that helps NCOs better prepare their soldiers for deployments.

"Soldiers today are smarter than ever before," said Dr. Michael E. Kirkpatrick, director, Deployment Health Support, Department of Defense. "More than ever, they question the world around them and the decisions that affect them. If NCOs view this [questioning by soldiers] as an opportunity to share information, they can present facts to their soldiers that will better prepare everyone for deployments."

Kirkpatrick's office evolved from the one created in the aftermath of Operation Desert Storm to answer questions about Gulf War Syndrome. He said the DoD's senior leadership saw the need to become more proactive in informing soldiers about possible illnesses deploying forces might encounter. The question, though, was who would provide that information to junior soldiers.

"The aim is for NCOs to translate information from large population studies on illnesses and diseases to individual-level information that makes sense to the soldier," Kirkpatrick said.

One of the answers to providing that information to NCOs is through DoD's DeploymentLink. The site, <http://deploymentlink.osd.mil>, is the NCO's source for:

- Current news
- Gulf War illnesses
- Medical readiness
- Deployments
- Family member issues

"One of the primary concerns we have is to prevent situations where units fail to properly screen soldiers for health complications before deploying to forward areas," Kirkpatrick said. "Keeping tabs on soldiers is clearly NCO business. We wanted to do our part and make health information readily available to NCOs so that they can do their jobs well."

"The bottom line is that NCOs need to be advocates for health concerns, and individuals need to take responsibility to get treatment when necessary."

New tool helps ID scam artists preying on military

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - Service members, Department of Defense civilians and their family members now have a tool to stop cons who prey on military personnel.

In a joint effort, DoD and the Federal Trade Commission created Military Sentinel, a Web site to be used to identify those who seek to steal identities and set up telemarketing scams, fake sweepstakes and get-rich-quick schemes.

"Members of the military, their families and civilian DoD employees face the same problems as other consumers," said Timothy Muris, the Federal Trade Commission chairman. "However, members of the military and DoD civilians have unique challenges: their extended work schedules; they're away from home for long periods; they relocate often and unexpectedly; and they may not have ready access to consumer-protection channels or consumer information."

Military Sentinel allows members of the U.S. Armed Forces to enter consumer complaints directly into a database that is immediately accessible by more than 500 law enforcement organizations throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. These law enforcement agencies use this complaint data to target cases for prosecution and other enforcement measures.

Installation commanders can use the site to make informed decisions when granting businesses access to their installation, Muris said. It will provide DoD with the means to gauge consumer-protection issues facing the military community, he added.

OMPF updates at the speed of the Internet

Active-duty soldiers can now access their official military personnel records online at <https://ompf.hoffman.army.mil/news.jsp>. The Web site allows soldiers to view their official records and submit updates electronically.

The new service is coordinated through Army Knowledge Online and requires the soldier's AKO user name and password for access. Clicking the direct link from the AKO Web site enables users to enter without having to reenter their user names and passwords.

Similarly, Army Reserve soldiers can view their records and submit updates electronically at the Army Reserve Personnel Command Web site, the My2xCitizen Portal, at <https://www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil/portal/>.

Although most National Guard enlisted soldiers do not have their OMPFs in permanent records, the existing National Guard permanent records should be included at the OMPF Web site in 2003. Until their permanent records are filed at the OMPF Web site, National Guard soldiers must go to their local Military Personnel Office to review their records.

New pocket-sized guide offers instant references for NCOs

By Staff Sgt. Dave Enders

A new, pocket-sized reference for NCOs is only a few mouse clicks away. Field Manual 7-22.7, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, is now available for electronic download; hard copies of FM 7-22.7 are scheduled to arrive at active-duty units this month.

According to the guide's preface, FM 7-22.7 provides the Army's NCOs a guide for leading, supervising and caring for soldiers. While not all-inclusive nor intended as a stand-alone manual, the guide offers NCOs a ready reference for most situations.

The U.S. Army Publishing Agency will distribute FM 7-22.7 to all established active-duty account holders; however, Army National Guard and Reserve units must order copies. All Army components may order copies of FM 7-22.7 through USAPA as they would any other field manuals.

In addition to the printed version, USAPA has established an electronic version for download at the Gen. Dennis J. Reimer Training & Doctrine Digital Library (<http://www.adtdl.army.mil/cgi-bin/atdl.dll/fm/7-22.7/fm7-22.7.htm>). NCOs can link to the Reimer library through Army Knowledge Online (<http://www.us.army.mil>) and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy home page (<http://usasma.bliss.army.mil/dotd/ncoguide.htm>). From the AKO home page, go to the Reference section and select "Manuals." The USASMA home page contains a direct link, and there's also a link at the "Training and Doctrine" section of the site.

Field Manual 7-22.7, which replaces Training Circular 22-6, *The Noncommissioned Officer's Guide*, is five chapters long and 5 1/2 inches wide by 8 1/2 inches long and fits in the cargo pocket of a battle dress uniform. The handbook offers instructions, guidance and information on NCO-related topics, including leadership, training, history, duties, responsibilities and authority.

In September 2001, Gen. John N. Abrams, former commander of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), directed an

update to Training Circular 22-6, *The Noncommissioned Officer's Guide*. He did so based on recommendations from the Army Training and Leadership Development Panel members, who had conducted a study to determine how the Army could make a professional NCO corps even better. One of the panel's recommendations was that FM 22-600-20, *The Army Noncommissioned Officer Guide*, be re-established, updated and published, but the recommendation didn't address TC 22-6.

Soon after the USASMA Director of Training and Doctrine, Sgt. Maj. Ricky Smith, was asked to oversee the project, THE EDGE Research and Development, an El Paso firm, was awarded the contract. Maj. (Ret.) Stephen Snyder led the three-person team, all retired soldiers.

"These are still soldiers who are passionate about what they're doing," said USASMA Command Sgt. Maj. Clifford R. West.

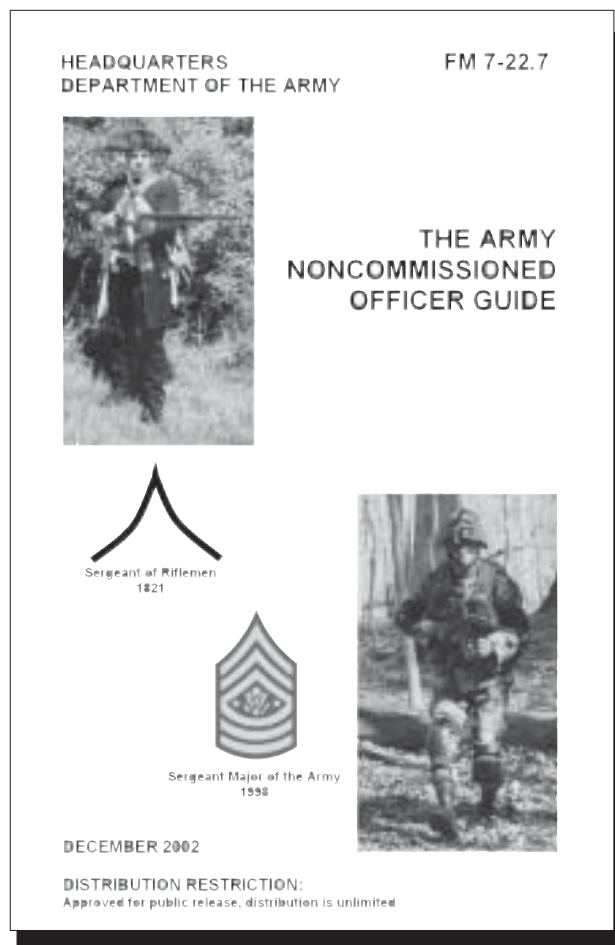
Although his writing team was responsible for assembling most of the information for FM 7-22.7, Snyder credited several others as key to the success. "The Sergeant Major of the Army took a personal interest in this project," said Snyder. In fact, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack L. Tilley endorsed the *NCO Vision* in the beginning of the book.

Snyder also specifically credited three others who he said greatly contributed to the vision and concept for FM 7-22.7: TRADOC Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony J. Williams, Combined Arms Center Command Sgt. Maj. Cynthia A. Pritchett, and West.

These top NCOs continually offered suggestions and guidance throughout the development of FM 7-22.7, said Snyder.

The writing team focused those top NCOs' vision to build a portable reference that Army leaders can easily reference in a variety of situations. The team recommended it as FM 7-22.7.

"It is a ready reference that draws from literally hundreds of other field manuals, Army regulations, Army pamphlets and other sources," said Snyder. "We wrote this so that all Army leaders could use it and benefit from it."



Handbook assists spouses in adapting to Army's culture

By Spc. Jimmy Norris

The Army is a world of its own that can be as unnerving as a first visit to a foreign country. It has its own culture, customs and even its own language. Acronyms like BAH, PX and ACS are all part of a soldier's daily lexicon. Soldiers don't sit down to dinner at 6 p.m. They eat chow at 1800. Even to new soldiers, military life can sometimes be confusing. To spouses, who are thrown into in the military community without any introduction, it can be somewhat daunting.

But help is on the way. *The Spouse's Handbook*, an online resource for soldiers' spouses, is scheduled for a tentative release date Feb. 1. *The Spouse's Handbook* is an initiative of Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley, who wanted a book for young spouses who are unaware of what's available to them within the Army support network said *The Spouse's Handbook* editor, Billy Williams, a training specialist assigned to the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy Directorate of Training and Doctrine.

While the book's target audience is the spouses of soldiers who are graduating the Primary Leadership Development Course, *The Spouse's Handbook* is designed for the spouses of soldiers of all ranks, and military occupational specialties or branches, Williams said.

"The protocol used for a junior enlisted spouse is same as that used for a senior enlisted [soldier's] or officer's spouse," Williams explained.

The book offers information on military customs and courtesies, services and problem solving. The book includes chapters on Army Family Team Building, Family Advocacy and social functions. It spells out military acronyms, military time and traditions, and includes a directory of useful services.

"It's designed mainly for spouses who don't know much about the military," said Shirley West, one of the main contributors to *The Spouse's Handbook*. With 30 years experience as an Army spouse, West has been a part of the soldier-spouse-Army team as her husband has risen through the ranks from private to command sergeant major. She's the veteran of 16 permanent change of station moves. She's held down the homefront and survived on her own through what's added up to 10 years of accumulated field time and countless temporary duty assignments. She's also



served as advisor for several family readiness groups. "When a soldier is about to become a sergeant, [*The Spouse's Handbook*] explains to the soldier's spouse what the new sergeant's job will be and what the spouse's role will be should she choose to participate."

"The military is now using a husband-and-wife-team concept," added Williams. "This is a tool that will equip the spouse to be a member of [the] team in the military support chain."

Williams started working on the handbook in November 2001. Shortly after finishing the first draft of *The Spouse's Handbook* five months later, he sent a copy of the 10-page booklet to West, who'd helped write *The Handbook for New Army Spouses*, a guide offered by Fort Campbell's Army Community Service, and asked for her input.

Together West and Williams began polling spouses throughout the Army to find out what they felt they needed to know. They e-mailed more than 100 people and enlisted the help of every major command sergeant major in the Army.

"I compiled a lot of information people gave me and put it in the guide. [Authorship of *The Spouse's Handbook*] was a combination of all of us who took an interest and wanted to help develop the book," said West.

The result of their efforts is a 39-page booklet aimed at making the military lifestyle easier to understand for the civilian spouses of soldiers.

"It's a how-to and a need-to-know booklet for spouses that are not familiar with the military," said Williams. "It's what every spouse wished they'd known before [their soldiers] reached the senior-NCO [or] senior-officer level. There's not a lot of military jargon and it's pretty easy reading."

West explained that *The Spouse's Handbook* is a living document. In fact, the Feb. 1 release is just the first edition.

"By no means do we know everything," she said. "We're going to solicit feedback for updates and additions. Since it's online we can update without the cost of producing new books."

The Spouse's Handbook, which according to Williams will be easy to download, will be posted online at <http://usasma.bliss.army.mil>. First click on "Training and Doctrine", then "PLDC" and finally "What's New."